

## ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

BIRDS AROUND THE WORLD: A GEOGRAPHICAL LOOK AT EVOLUTION AND BIRDS. By Dean Amadon. Natural History Press, Garden City, New York, 1966:  $5\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{8}$  in., xii + 175 pp., 30 line drawings. \$3.95.

Scientists write mostly for one another. Some specialists are scarcely intelligible except to others in the same specialty. Conversely, many popularizers are less than competent technically. Therefore, I always feel a sense of gratitude when a first-rate biologist takes up a scientific topic for an audience not as well versed in it as he. Amadon has done so here.

He considers why the various kinds of birds are found where they are. In doing so, he discusses evolution and ecology with singular freedom from the jargon that often makes these topics so formidable to the uninitiated. In some passages his treatment is extremely elementary, but in others, as when he examines critically the rival ecological systems for classifying areas, his presentation will be of interest to more sophisticated readers also. The examples are frequent and well-chosen. They are drawn most often from North America, but include many also from other parts of the world. Particularly global in scope are the examples in the chapters on the distribution of certain orders of birds and on the avian peculiarities of the major biogeographic regions of the world.

The illustrations are simple in the extreme but serve their purpose.

Although every critical reader will find a few statements he would like to debate with Amadon, I found none that detracted from his main points. I have a mild objection to the implication on page 14 that the first species of bird evolved in Bavaria, where the remains of *Archaeopteryx* were excavated. On page 42, I would like to have seen him distinguish between water as such in food and water available through the chemical breakdown of food. Finally, I wish he had picked a more distinctive title; in view of all of the recent permutations of the words *bird* and *world* in book titles, I am afraid this one will be hard to remember by name. However, these are minor suggestions that I mention merely in the hope they will be helpful to someone.

The book is so short (a truly interested reader will read it in one sitting) and so clear and plain-spoken that I believe it will be read by many people who would not ordinarily take up a book-length work on this subject. Although not written for children, it is suitable reading for a bright teen-ager with an interest in birds. It ought to be useful also as collateral reading for an elementary class in ornithology. It will be a worthy addition to many ornithological libraries.—HAROLD MAYFIELD.

THE APPALACHIANS. By Maurice Brooks. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1965:  $6 \times 8\frac{3}{4}$  in., xvii + 346 pp., 40 pp. of photos (8 in col.); 24 drawings by Lois and Louis Darling; endpaper map by Samuel H. Bryant. \$6.95.

This book is a detailed and personalized account of the natural history and related aspects of the physiographic feature known as the Appalachian Mountains. It is the first in an announced series of books, entitled collectively "The Naturalist's America," to be edited by Roger Tory Peterson and John A. Livingston. The series proposes, in the words of the publisher, "to recapture the inquiring spirit of the old naturalists."

There are, of course, several possible approaches to an account of the extensive subject of the Appalachians. Maurice Brooks has utilized a varied approach—first a general discussion of the entire mountain chain in terms of background, geological history, and roads and trails, then a series of vignettes with varied emphases—a geo-